DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 231 802 SP 022 682

AUTHOR Sharpe, Joseph D.; Talbert, Gene
TITLE Inservice for Diverse Educators.
PUB DATE 19 Nov 82
NOTE 11p.
PUB TYPE Reports - Descriptive (141)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *College School Cooperation; *Extension Education; *Inservice Teacher Education; Needs Assessment; Rural Areas; *Rural Schools; School Districts; *Schools of Education; *Teacher Workshops
IDENTIFIERS *Tennessee Technological University

ABSTRACT

The rural, sparsely populated nature of the service area for Tennessee Technological University (TTU) poses special problems for providing state-mandated inservice teacher education activities. Highly specific inservice at the district level is often impractical and prohibitively expensive. TTU hosts an annual two-day conference for regional school districts at which specific and general needs are assessed, and faculty members at TTU assist extensively in subsequent inservice activities. One program provided by TTU's Division of Extended Services was designed to meet needs of teachers in a rural school district with 10 schools--elementary, secondary, and vocational. Two short workshops, appropriate for a diverse group of educators and designed to meet their expressed needs, were developed. These workshops were oriented toward practical applications in schools and were applicable toward inservice, recertification, or elective credits towards a graduate degree. Two broad areas of interest were addressed: educational change in curriculum and methodology, and interpersonal needs. Each workshop included six days of class instruction, two additional field trips, and one special assignment. Teachers' ratings of the workshops indicated that they were effective and well-planned. (JD)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED231802

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
Joseph D. Sharpe
Gene Talbert
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
✓ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

INSERVICE FOR DIVERSE EDUCATORS

Presentors: Dr. Joseph D. Sharpe
Chair, Elementary Education
Tennessee Technological University

Dr. Gene Talbert
Coordinator of Laboratory Experiences
Tennessee Technological University

Tennessee Technological University is located in a rural area about halfway between Nashville and Knoxville. Its service area includes 14 counties, all rural and sparsely populated. The College of Education has a deep commitment to service throughout the area. The Department of Elementary Education provides support services for the "Basic Skills First" program. The Department of Administration and Supervision maintains a liaison relationship with each school district in the service area to facilitate communication between the College of Education and the schools. All faculty members are encouraged to assist in inservice activities, to provide consultation services, and to teach off-campus courses as needed. The Division of Extended Services employs personnel in each county to assess educational needs and to assist the University in responding appropriately to those needs.

All public school teachers in the state of Tennessee are required to participate regularly in inservice education activities. In fact, the plan now followed was field-tested under the support of a grant from the National Council of States on Inservice Education.

Planning guidelines for approved inservice education activities include a definition of inservice education, the legal basis, system inservice plans, designing approved activities, and submission of the

SP022682

inservice plan.

An integral part of this plan is a recommended sequence for developing system-wide inservice education programs. The sequence is to (1) assess needs, (2) establish priorities, (3) develop objectives, (4) design inservice activities, and (5) evaluate the program. The system-wide plan should reflect the assessed needs of all professional staff.

The rural, sparsely populated nature of the service area presents special problems for inservice planners. The number of teachers in a specific discipline is usually very low. Highly specific inservice at the district level is often impractical and prohibitively expensive. Two approaches have been followed to deal with these problems. First, TTU has joined forces with regional school districts to host a pre-school conference serving highly specific needs as well as general interest themes. On August 17-18, 1982, Tennessee Tech hosted the 37th Annual Educational Conference. The planning of the conference is conducted by the Executive Committee which is made up of classroom teachers, administrators, and college personnel. There is a keynote speaker who has wide appeal among area educators. In 1981, Dr. Lola May gave the keynote address; and in 1982, Dr. Harry Wong spoke. There are interest sessions throughout the two-day conference which can be taken for college credit or non credit. This conference has been an annual event since it was implemented by Dr. T. J. Farr, former Dean of the College of Education, in an attempt to bring effective inservice education to the region.

Second, school districts sponsor inservice activities that are more general in thrust--ones related to topics such as general methodology and classroom management. Faculty members at TTU assist extensively in

these inservice experiences.

Another issue frequently involved in planning inservice education is the need for recertification credit from a college or university. Rural educators needing recertification credit often find it difficult to go to the university for courses; and in some instances, they find it highly inconvenient to tie up one evening each week for a quarter in a full-length course. In TTU's service area many teachers are housewives with family responsibilities or individuals with other commitments in addition to teaching. For example, some operate farms that require extensive attention during summers. Others are involved in seasonal activities such as tourism. These educators present a special challenge to those who plan inservice activities and to higher education units committed to serving teachers. It was just such a challenge that was brought to the College of Education early in the Spring of 1982 when Mrs. Cleo Walker contacted the Division of Extended Services at Tennessee Technological University.

Mrs. Walker is Supervisor of Instruction for the White County School District. There are 3,835 students housed in ten schools--one high school, a vocational school which is operated cooperatively with Van Buren County, one middle school (grades 7-8), six elementary schools (K-6), and two primary schools (K-4). There are approximately 210 teachers in the system. The county is predominantly rural. The area has been hampered for a number of years in improving the schools because of a limited economic base derived largely from agriculture. However, in the last few years light industry has begun to move into the area.

Mrs. Walker shared the needs she had identified with Dr. Charles Golden, Associate Dean of the Division of Extended Services. Believing

that the University could respond appropriately to the needs, Dr. Golden contacted Dr. Joe Sharpe, Chair of Elementary Education and Dr. Gene Talbert, Coordinator of Laboratory Experiences. These four worked jointly to develop plans for two short workshops meeting the following criteria:

A. Content of workshops must be appropriate to a diverse group of educators--elementary school, high school and vocational school classroom teachers, guidance counselors, assistant principals, and principals.

B. Content of workshops must be consistent with expressed needs of educators involved.

C. Workshops should be oriented toward practical applications in schools.

D. Workshops must be applicable toward inservice credit, recertification credit, and elective credit toward a graduate degree in education.

E. Workshops must be scheduled within as short a period as possible early in the first summer session.

Major topics identified in the needs assessment were first organized into groups. Although several categories were present, two broad groupings seemed possible. One of the themes centered around educational change, both in curriculum and in methodology. The other generally focused on interpersonal relationships and personal needs as they affect functioning in the profession. The two workshops were then organized around these themes. Each workshop was planned to include 24 hours of class instruction spread over six days, two additional field trips, and one special assignment. Logistical considerations altered field trip

plans slightly; however, most of the activities proceeded as planned.

The session relating to determining curriculum needs featured a panel made up of a State Department of Education official, a school board member, two supervisors of instruction, and a parent. The discussion focused to a large extent on basic skills instruction and how other areas of the curriculum, i.e., music, physical education, and art are faring in today's schools. The highlight of the session, "Improvement of Instructional Effectiveness" was a field trip to the Joe L. Evins Center for Appalachian Crafts and Tech Aqua (a biological station located on Center Hill Lake). The trip was an attempt to improve instructional effectiveness through the use of community resources.

Another day was devoted to determining effective methods of adapting instruction to individual situations. To acquaint participants with one more approach, Dr. Talbert administered a learning style inventory to the participants. A class participant also shared how she had started a RIF (Reading is Fundamental) program in an adjoining county.

A major part of the first session was adapting instruction to individual differences. Different organizational plans and educational technology were discussed. As in other sessions, a class participant shared ideas which had been successful for her in the classroom. It was the feeling of the instructors that classroom teachers should be given opportunities to share successful ideas as much as possible.

The final session of the first workshop was devoted to educational technology. Class participants were given opportunities to have hands-on experience with micro-computers. There were three different activities in operation at the same time--micro-computers, computer resources, and a short-wave radio. Students were directed to each of the centers sometime

during the day.

The second workshop theme was "Personal and Professional Relationships in Education." Resource personnel included a principal of a regional school widely recognized for outstanding parent relationships, a university professor well-versed in techniques of attitude change, a psychologist from the University Counseling Center, and the two coordinators of the workshops. The workshop covered cooperative relationships in education, leadership in education, attitude change, classroom management as it relates to stress, and teacher burnout. One class session on cooperative relationships was conducted on a houseboat owned by the family of a class member. Lunch was eaten together, and several students remained during the afternoon to enjoy the sun and water. The last day was spent on campus in the Alumni Lounge. This provided a comfortable, relaxed setting to explore teacher stress and burnout and ways of coping effectively with them. The Associate Director of the University Counseling Center led two training sessions in relaxation therapy.

After the workshops were completed, the Division of Extended Services sent an evaluation form to each participant. The form was developed by Dr. Golden and approved by both coordinators. Ratings for the workshop sessions were exceptionally high. The average rating was 9.17 on a ten-point scale. Individual session ratings ranged from 7.64 to 9.94. Below is the evaluation instrument with the average for each item. Names of participants have been omitted.

Summer Short Courses

FOCUS ON EDUCATIONAL CHANGE
PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL RELATIONSHIPS IN EDUCATION
Summer 1982

Please rate each item following as shown on the scale.

1. June 17 - "Determining Curriculum Needs for your School/System" (____, ____, ____, ____)

POOR 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 EXCELLENT

Mean Rating = 7.96

2. June 18 - "Improving Instruction Through Improved Teacher-Student Communication" - Field Trips: Joe L. Evins Center for Appalachian Crafts and Tech Aqua

POOR 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 EXCELLENT

Mean Rating = 9.77

3. June 19 - "Improvement of Instructional Effectiveness" (____) "Learning Styles" (____)

POOR 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 EXCELLENT

Mean Rating = 8.72

4. June 21 - "Unit on Tennessee" (____) "Media and Technology in Education" (____)

POOR 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 EXCELLENT

Mean Rating = 9.36

5. June 22 - "Individualized Instruction" (____)

POOR 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 EXCELLENT

Mean Rating = 8.72

6. June 23 - "Hands-On Computer Assisted Teaching" (____)

POOR 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 EXCELLENT

Mean Rating = 9.58

7. June 23 - (____) "Demonstration of Computers"

POOR 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 EXCELLENT

Mean Rating = 9.00

8. June 24 - "The Effective Parent-Teacher Conference" (____) "Volunteers" (____, ____)

POOR 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 EXCELLENT

Mean Rating = 9.00

9. June 25 - "Cooperative Relationships" - Lecture on the Lake (____)

POOR 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 EXCELLENT
Mean Rating = 9.94

10. June 26 - "The Relationship of Classroom Management to Stress" (____)

POOR 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 EXCELLENT
Mean Rating = 9.17

11. June 28 - "Attitude Change in Professional Personnel" (____)

POOR 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 EXCELLENT
Mean Rating = 7.64

12. June 29 - "Leadership in Education" (____, ____)

POOR 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 EXCELLENT
Mean Rating = 9.00

13. June 30 - "Teacher Burnout" (____)

POOR 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 EXCELLENT
Mean Rating = 9.60

14. The total evaluation of the course as to class organization, parallel assignments, student expectations, student participation, and content covered.

POOR 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 EXCELLENT
Mean Rating = 9.63

15. The faculty, (____), directed group discussion, but did not dominate or restrict, encouraged participation, involved students, and was prepared and knowledgeable in the course content.

POOR 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 EXCELLENT
Mean Rating = 9.88

16. The faculty, (____), directed group discussion, but did not dominate or restrict, encouraged participation, involved students, and was prepared and knowledgeable in the course content.

POOR 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 EXCELLENT
Mean Rating = 9.75

Perhaps the best way to get a feel for the success of the workshops is to look at some of the written comments from the evaluators.

> "This is an excellent way to: share ideas, keep up with current motivational ideas, make use of community resource people, meet new friends, and reassure us (as teachers) that others are having similar problems and successes."

> "This workshop provided an atmosphere that was warm and open and I feel like this contributed to the unique learning and sharing experience. I personally benefitted from the workshop in many areas, and I feel that I can take ideas as well as changes in my attitude back to my children and my faculty."

> "I feel that this is one of the best workshops I have ever attended. There seemed to be some kind of a bond between the class members and teachers that was conducive to good constructive types of class discussions. Each member felt that they could express their opinion regardless of what it was without being put down."

> "I thought the course was great. I really enjoyed it because teachers from other counties took the courses. We were able to share experiences and ideas."

> "This was the most enjoyable education course I have had. Dr. Talbert and Dr. Sharpe did a great job of organization and planning. I feel that the field trips should be continued and increased. It was good to be able to relax and <u>listen</u> to teachers without the constant scramble of note taking in preparation for dreaded tests. We somehow became a <u>family</u>."

> "I consider the short courses just completed in Sparta the most enjoyable, as well as, the most beneficial in my Tech experience. The exchange of ideas was monumental. The projects and field trips were interesting. As an educator, I am eager to get back into the classroom so that I may utilize these ideas."

What made this workshop go over as well as it did? Finding this answer is probably the key to assuring success in future workshops for such a diverse group. In analyzing informal comments as well as the more structured evaluations, the following ideas have been suggested:

1. The content came from expressed interests of the participants and covered a relatively broad but related range of topics.

2. Planning was done by a team, including the two coordinators.

3. The two coordinators functioned as a team, both present for nearly all activities. They rode together to and from the sessions and continuously evaluated what was happening.
4. Resource personnel were carefully selected for the specific topics and their ability to relate to teachers.
5. Several class sessions were held in "other-than-ordinary" settings. It is interesting to note that the three highest ratings for individual sessions were given activities done away from the location of the workshops.
6. The workshop provided an atmosphere that was warm, open, and conducive to "good constructive types of class discussions."